

Good morning Chairman Sinrud, members of the committee

It's a privilege to have this opportunity to speak to you today regarding HB 608. My name is Teresa Cowan, I am the executive director of a child abuse prevention agency that has been serving Missoula County for 26 years, and for the past 5 years the Parenting Place has been a Montana Children's Trust fund grant recipient. I would like to give you a glimpse of what a typical program might accomplish with a grant of \$15,000 from the Trust Fund.

First and foremost, our programs very often cost more to operate than we ever have in our budgets, but being the resourceful, practical and capable managers that we are, we find ways to capitalize on that \$15,000 and use it to leverage funds from other sources as a means of sustaining our programs, however, many of our agencies continue to have waiting lists for services.

The Parenting Place offers a research based, best practices approach to child abuse and neglect prevention through parent education, home visiting/mentoring services, extended family support and respite child care to families affected by incarceration. We provide parenting classes at the Missoula Pre Release Center, where we are able to begin building a relationship with the parent, that relationship provides an avenue to become involved with their children and extended family, who we provide support, respite child care and parent education to as well. Upon a parents release from PRC, we "follow" them right out the door and into the community, back into their homes, back into the role of parent. Our Parent Aide home visiting program offers the individualized support that these families need in order to be successful.

I would like to share with you some statistics that we have gathered over the past 4 years, that reinforce the concept that prevention really does save money.

Over the course of 4 years The Parenting Place has worked with:

178 incarcerated parents through Missoula Pre Release Center
These families represent a total of 22 counties

71 women
107 men

Through our work with these parents we also provided service to their extended family and children, which includes **an additional 31 adults and 372 children.**

Currently, the State of Montana is experiencing a corrections' recidivism rate of 47.7% for males and 44.6% for females. This means that a significant number of the men and women leaving pre release or prisons are re offending and returning to those facilities, only to continue costing Montanans more money. Why is this important to note? Because current programming funded by Montana Children's Trust Fund includes our Parent Aide Program that I have been talking about. We are working with this population

of incarcerated individuals, who also happen to be parents. Through diligence and dedication we have worked to create a successful program and we submit to the committee today that with a recidivism rate of only 14% in the population we serve ... our program is just that: successful.

With our recidivism rate of 14%, only 25 parents (out of the 178 that we have worked with) have re-offended and returned to prison or pre release. But, if we had not provided services to these parents and they experienced the state rate of recidivism, which could be averaged for our purposes today to be 46%, 80 parents of that 178 could be costing our state an average of \$76/day.

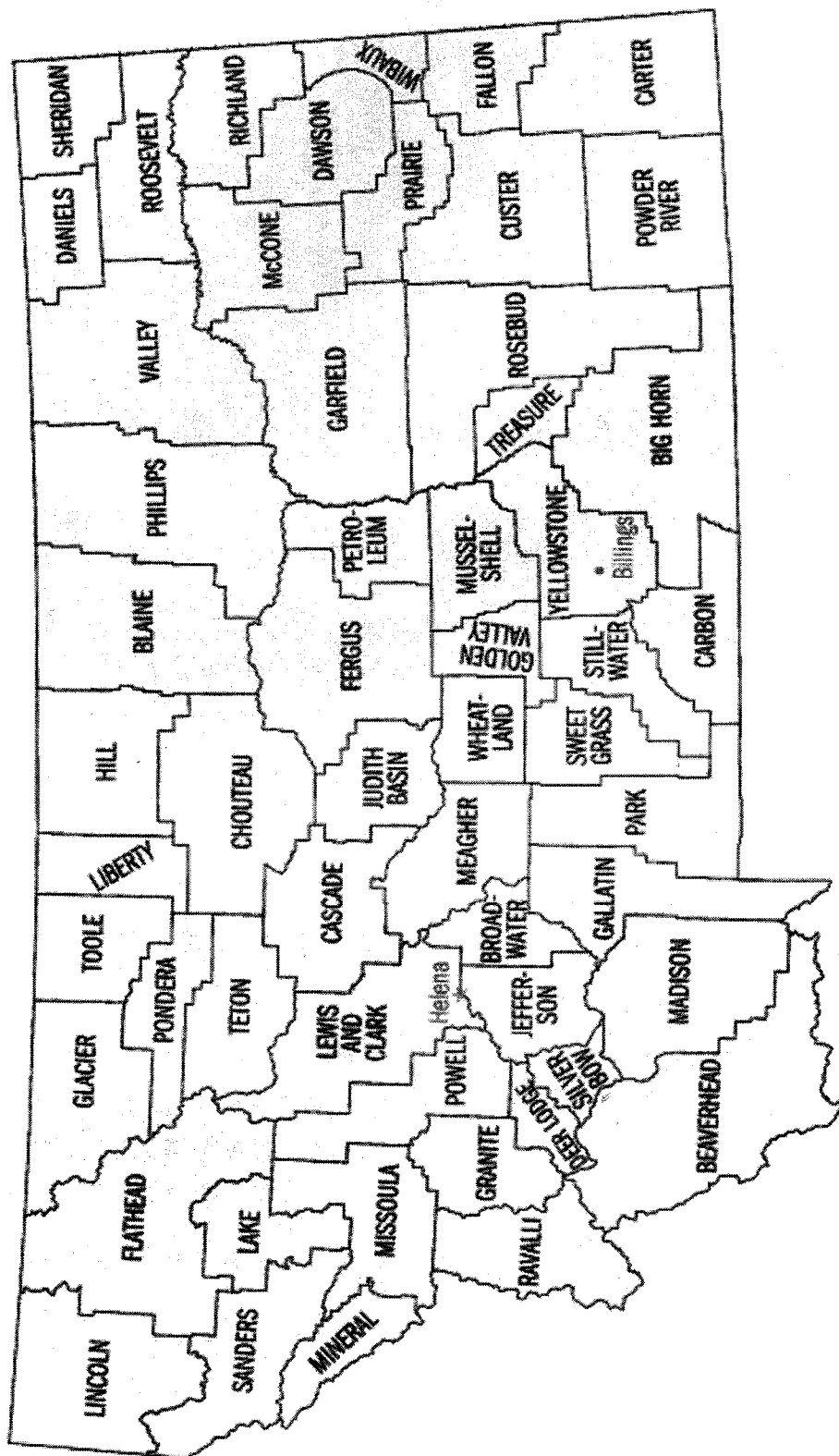
Due to the substantial difference in our recidivism rate and that of the state, it appears that The Parenting Place may be, in part, responsible for preventing 55 parents from returning to prison or pre release.

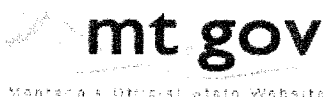
Those 55 individuals @ \$76 / day would cost our state an astounding \$ 1,525, 700 in a years time.

Besides saving over 1.5 Million dollars, the best thing about keeping those 55 parents in the community, in their home and in their role as parent, is that they will be utilizing their new skills and knowledge to break the cycle of abuse, neglect and criminality for their children.

Montana Children's Trust Fund grantee agencies across the state can tell you similar stories, provide you with similar statistics about families they have kept out of our most costly systems—corrections and health and human services. Your investment today is truly a responsible response to Montana taxpayers.

Thank you.





Quick Facts

The June 30, 2006, male prison population was 2,440 offenders and is expected to grow by about 6% per year. This includes Montana State Prison, regional prisons at Great Falls and Glendive, Crossroads Correctional Center at Shelby and county jails.

The June 30, 2006, female prison population was 297 offenders and is expected to grow by 17% per year. This includes Montana Women's Prison in Billings and county jails.

The Department of Corrections supervises more than 12,000 offenders.

About 77 percent of those offenders are managed outside of prison.

More than 8,200 offenders were on probation, parole or the intensive supervision program as of Oct. 31, 2006

Theft and possession of drugs are the two most common offenses for both men and women.

About 43% of incarcerated males and 81% of incarcerated females were convicted of one or more non-violent offenses.

Of the 1,548 male inmates that were conditionally released from various correctional programs from June 2002 to October 2006, 37% violated the rules of their conditional release. Of those, 1% committed new crimes.

Of the 468 female inmates that were conditionally released from various correctional programs from June 2002 to October 2006, 27% have violated the rules of their conditional release. Of those, 2% were for new crimes.

American Indians make up approximately 27% of the female prison population and 18% of the male prison population. Indians account for 6.5% of Montana's overall population.

36% of the Montana's inmate population is over 40. That percentage is increasing at a rate of 2-3% per year.

The most recent recidivism rate is 47.7% for males and 44.6% for females; 48% of those return to a higher level of custody in the first year.

The typical Montana probation and parole officer supervises 70 to 100 offenders.

The cost of housing an inmate in Montana ranges from \$60 to \$92 per day.

The cost of probation and parole supervision in Montana ranges from \$4-\$8 per day.

1.5 Million U.S. Kids Have Parent in Prison

August 30, 2000

Almost 1.5 million minor children (17 years old and younger), an estimated 2 percent of America's kids, had a mother or father in federal or state prison in 1999, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. That figure has grown in step with the swelling of the nation's prison population, with an increase of more than 500,000 children since 1991. A majority of the children with imprisoned parents (58 percent) were younger than 10 years old - the average was eight years old. According to the BJS report, imprisoned parents were overwhelmingly male (93 percent), as is the general prison population, and predominately held in state prisons, rather than federal facilities (89 percent compared to 11 percent). The number of minor children with an imprisoned father (1,372,700) rose 58 percent from 1991 through 1999, compared to a 98 percent increase during the same period in the number of minors with an imprisoned mother (126,100).

Half of the parents in state prisons were black, about a quarter were white and a fifth were Hispanic. In 1999 an estimated 767,200 black children, 384,500 white children and 301,600 Hispanic children had a parent in prison. The percentage of black children in the U.S. resident population with an imprisoned parent (7.0 percent) was nearly nine times higher than that of white children (0.8 percent). Hispanic children were three times as likely as white children to have a parent in prison (2.6 percent).

State prisoners who were parents were less likely to be violent offenders (44 percent) than inmates without children (51 percent), the report said. Three-quarters of state prisoners who were parents had a prior conviction, and a majority (56 percent) had previously been incarcerated. On average, the imprisoned parents expected to serve more than six-and-a-half years in state prison and eight-and-a-half years in federal prison.

More than 80 percent of all parents in prison reported that their minor children lived with the other parent, but these answers differed sharply by gender. About 90 percent of fathers in state prisons said at least one of their minor children were now living with their mother, while 28 percent of mothers in prison said their child's father was the current care giver. Mothers most often said their children's grandparents were the care givers (53 percent), compared to 13 percent of the fathers who said their children were with grandparents.

Forty-six percent of all parents in state and federal prisons said they were living with their children just prior to their admission to prison. Among parents in state prisons, 44 percent of the fathers lived with their children prior to their admission, compared to 64 percent of the mothers. As of December 31, 1999, an

estimated 336,300 U.S. households with minor children had a resident parent in prison.

Forty percent of the imprisoned fathers and 60 percent of the mothers reported weekly contact with their children by phone, mail or visit. However, a majority of both fathers (57 percent) and mothers (54 percent) reported never having had a personal visit with their children since their admission to state prison. More than 60 percent of the parents in state prisons reported being held more than 100 miles from their last place of residence.

The study also found that almost 60 percent of the parents in state prisons reported having used drugs in the month before their offense, and 25 percent reported a history of alcohol dependence. More than a third of the parents in state prisons committed their offense while under the influence of alcohol.

About 14 percent reported a mental illness, and 70 percent did not have a high school diploma. At the time of their most recent arrest, 27 percent of the fathers and 50 percent of the mothers in state prisons were unemployed. In the month prior to their arrest, 46 percent of the parents said they had incomes of at least \$1,000 a month, and 27 percent said their income derived from illegal activities. Mothers in state prisons were twice as likely as fathers to say they had been homeless the year before their arrests, 18 percent compared to 8 percent.

About half of the parents in state prison were never married and a quarter were currently married. In the month before their arrest, 20 percent had been living with their children in two-parent households, 18 percent were living with their children as single parents and 62 percent lived apart from their children.

The data are based on personal interviews in state and federal correctional facilities during which the inmates described various aspects of their lives both before and during incarceration. The special report, "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children" (NCJ-182335), was written by BJS policy analyst Christopher J. Mumola.

The report may be obtained from the BJS Internet site at:
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/iptc.htm> .



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Incarcerated Parents and Their Children

Presents data from the 1997 Surveys of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities concerning inmates with minor children. Numeric tables present data on the percent of inmates with children under the age of 18, whether or not inmates lived with their children prior to admission, and the children's current care givers. Tables also present 1999 estimates of the number of parents in State and Federal prisons, as well as the number of minor children and households affected by the imprisonment of a parent. Information on inmates' frequency and type of contact with their children is provided. Characteristics of incarcerated parents are detailed in tables which present data on current offenses, criminal histories, and sentence lengths. This BJS Special Report also presents data on incarcerated parents' reports of prior drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health services, as well as various socioeconomic data, including employment and income at time of arrest, and prior experiences of homelessness. Highlights include the following:

- In 1999 an estimated 721,500 State and Federal prisoners were parents to 1,498,800 children under age 18.
- 22% of all minor children with a parent in prison were under 5 years old.
- Prior to admission, less than half of the parents in State prison reported living with their children – 44% of fathers, 64% of mothers.

8/00 NCJ 182335

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